METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR UPDATING STITCH DATA IN A MEMORY CARD VIA A WIRELESS TRANSMISSION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field:

The present invention relates generally to an improved method and system for transferring data to a sewing/embroidery system. In particular, the present invention relates to a method and system for using wireless transmission between a sewing/embroidery machine and a source system to update stitch information in a memory card.

2. Description of Related Art:

Advances in computer technology have provided the embroidery and sewing machine market with various methods to transfer embroidery designs to an embroidery or sewing machine. Embroidery designs are employed by the embroidery or sewing machine to guide the machine's movement of the embroidery arm. The embroidery arm is directed to stitch the same pattern specified in the design.

Embroidery designs may be acquired in a variety of ways, including purchasing designs stored on floppy disks and CD-ROMs, or downloading designs from the Internet and storing the designs on a computer's hard drive. The embroidery design is then typically supplied to the embroidery or sewing machine via a data storage device, such as a memory card or floppy disk. The memory card or

floppy disk is typically inserted into a built-in embroidery card slot within the embroidery machine, which reads the contents of the card and is then able to stitch the designs stored on the card.

Current methods for transferring designs obtained from a source such as a PC's hard drive to an embroidery machine include storing these designs on a blank memory card and transferring the designs to the embroidery machine in the same manner as describe above.

However, conventional methods for updating the stitch data available to the embroidery machine can be cumbersome. For example, the content of the memory card or floppy disk is updated with desired stitch data via a PC or other source system. Next, the updated card or disk is physically carried from the source system to the embroidery machine. The updated card or disk is interfaced with the embroidery machine and the desired stitch information is then available for use. Since these steps are performed each time new stitch information is desired, changing stitch data available to the embroidery machine can be a time-consuming process.

In addition, although some conventional embroidery machines include the ability to directly connect to the PC, the addition of this interface method to the embroidery machine requires that the machine software be extensively modified or designed from the ground up prior to implementing this peer-to-peer protocol.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to have an improved method and system for updating stitch data available to an embroidery machine.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method and system for using a wireless transmission between an embroidery machine and a source system to update stitch data in a memory card. A command to update the stitch data in the memory card is received. Once it is determined that the memory card is not currently in use, the memory card is logically disconnected from the embroidery machine. The new stitch data is then transferred from a source system to the memory card via a wireless connection, and the contents of the memory card are updated with the new stitch data. The memory card is then logically reconnected to the embroidery machine and the new stitch data is ready to be used by the embroidery machine.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a pictorial representation of an embroidery system in which the present invention may be implemented in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 3 is a block diagram showing a wireless stitch data update system in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a block diagram illustrating a memory card in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a block diagram illustrating a memory card in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 6 is a flowchart illustrating a process in the logical design in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention provides a method and system for transferring embroidery designs from a source system to an embroidery machine via a wireless connection. The present invention may be implemented using a stand-alone embroidery machine, a combination sewing/embroidery machine, or any other device which employs stitch data instructions. The present invention may also be implemented using a source system, such as, for example, a personal computer (PC) or a personal digital assistant (PDA) device.

With reference now to the figures and in particular with reference to **Figure 1**, a pictorial representation of an embroidery system in which the present invention may be implemented is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. An embroidery machine **100** is depicted which includes a built-in memory card slot **102**. Embroidery machine **100** is connected to computer **104** via a wireless connection **106**. USB device **108** provides the interface between embroidery machine **100** and computer **104**. Computer **104** is depicted which includes system unit **110**, video display terminal **112**, keyboard **114**, storage devices **116**, which may include floppy drives and other types of permanent and removable storage media, and mouse **118**. Additional or alternate input devices may be included with personal computer **104**, such as, for example, a joystick, touchpad, touch screen, trackball, microphone, and the like. Computer **104** can be implemented using any suitable computer, such as an IBM

eServer computer or IntelliStation computer, which are products of International Business Machines Corporation, located in Armonk, New York. Although the depicted representation includes a computer, other embodiments of the present invention may be implemented in other types of data processing systems, such as a network computer. Computer **104** also preferably includes a graphical user interface (GUI) that may be implemented by means of systems software residing in computer readable media in operation within computer **104**.

With reference now to **Figure 2**, a block diagram of a data processing system is shown in which the present invention may be implemented. Data processing system **200** is an example of a computer, such as computer **100** in **Figure 1**, in which code or instructions implementing the processes of the present invention may be located. Data processing system **200** employs a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus architecture. Although the depicted example employs a PCI bus, other bus architectures such as Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) and Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) may be used. Processor **202** and main memory **204** are connected to PCI local bus **206** through PCI bridge **208**. PCI bridge **208** also may include an integrated memory controller and cache memory for processor **202**. Additional connections to PCI local bus **206** may be made through direct component interconnection or through add-in boards. In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **210**, Intelligent Drive Electronics (IDE) interface **212**, and expansion bus interface **214** are connected to PCI local bus **206** by direct

component connection. In contrast, USB adapter **216**, graphics adapter **218**, and audio/video adapter **219** are connected to PCI local bus **206** by add-in boards inserted into expansion slots. Expansion bus interface **214** provides a connection for a keyboard and mouse adapter **220**, modem **222**, and additional memory **224**. IDE interface **212** provides a connection for hard disk drive **226**, tape drive **228**, and CD-ROM drive **230**. Typical PCI local bus implementations will support three or four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors.

An operating system runs on processor **202** and is used to coordinate and provide control of various components within data processing system **200** in **Figure 2**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating system such as Windows XP, which is available from Microsoft Corporation. An object oriented programming system such as Java may run in conjunction with the operating system and provides calls to the operating system from Java programs or applications executing on data processing system **200**. "Java" is a trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented programming system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive **226**, and may be loaded into main memory **204** for execution by processor **202**.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware in **Figure 2** may vary depending on the implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash read-only memory (ROM), equivalent nonvolatile memory, or optical disk drives and the like,

may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in **Figure 2**. Also, the processes of the present invention may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

For example, data processing system **200**, if optionally configured as a network computer, may not include IDE interface **212**, hard disk drive **226**, tape drive **228**, and CD-ROM **230**. In that case, the computer, to be properly called a client computer, includes some type of network communication interface, such as LAN adapter **210**, modem **222**, or the like. As another example, data processing system **200** may be a stand-alone system configured to be bootable without relying on some type of network communication interface, whether or not data processing system **200** comprises some type of network communication interface. As a further example, data processing system **200** may be a personal digital assistant (PDA), which is configured with ROM and/or flash ROM to provide non-volatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data.

The depicted example in **Figure 2** and above-described examples are not meant to imply architectural limitations. For example, data processing system **200** also may be a notebook computer or hand held computer in addition to taking the form of a PDA. Data processing system **200** also may be a kiosk or a Web appliance.

Turning now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram illustrating components used in transferring data from a source system, such as data processing system **200** in **Figure 2**, to an embroidery machine system via a wireless

connection are depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this example, embroidery machine system **300** includes an embroidery machine **302** and memory card **306**. Embroidery machine **302** includes a memory card connector **304**. Memory card connector **304** provides the interface between embroidery machine **302** and the memory card **306** housing the embroidery designs. In particular, memory card connector **304** handles the transfer of data received from the memory card using any known wireless transmission method. Wireless transmission methods may include, for example, line of sight transmission such as infrared (IR) signal transmissions, and broadcast transmissions such as radio frequency (RF) and Blue Tooth transmissions. Although the receiving machine in this example is embroidery machine **302**, the receiving machine can be any device that employs stitch information, depending on the particular implementation.

Memory card **306**, also known as a flash memory card, is used to store data for use on embroidery machine **302**. In this example, memory card **306** includes a flash memory **308**, a microcontroller **310**, a memory card connector **312**, and a wireless interface **314**. Memory card connector **312** may be a built-in memory card slot within embroidery machine **302**, or a connection to a memory card module located external to embroidery machine **302**. Inserting memory card **306** into a built-in memory card slot within embroidery machine **302** allows the embroidery machine to access the stitch data via memory card connector **312**.

Embroidery machine **302** is then able to use the stitch data on memory card **306** in flash memory **308**.

Personal computer (PC) **316** is connected to memory card **306** via a wireless connection. USB interface device **318** is connected to personal computer **316** through USB interface **324**, such as USB adapter **216** shown in **Figure 2**. It should be noted that although this example implementation employs a USB device, other interface mechanisms may be used, including, for example, IEEE1394, PCCard (PCMCIA), compact PCMCIA, PCI, or any other expansion bus interface card. USB interface device **318** facilitates the wireless connection between memory card **306** and personal computer (PC) **316**. USB interface device **318** includes microcontroller **320** and wireless interface **322**. Stitch data may be transferred from PC **316** to memory card **306** via the wireless connection. Thus, memory card **306** is updated to reflect the new stitch data from PC **316** while memory card **306** is located within the built-in memory card or within a memory card module located external to embroidery machine **302**. Consequently, embroidery machine **302** is able to access new stitch on updated memory card **306**.

Referring now to **Figure 4**, a block diagram illustrating components used within a memory card, such as memory card **306** in **Figure 3**, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this preferred implementation, memory card **400** includes internal memory card bus **402** connected to complex programmable logic device (CPLD) **404**, flash memory **406**, and microcontroller **408**. Memory card **400** also includes

memory card connector **410** connected to complex programmable logic device (CPLD) **404** via card connector bus **414**, and wireless interface **416** connected to microcontroller **408**. It should be noted that any logic device, such as a field programmable gate array (FPGA) or application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), may be used in place of complex programmable logic device (CPLD) **404** or microcontroller **408**. Transmission methods of wireless interface **416** may include line of sight transmission and broadcast transmission.

An alternative embodiment of memory card **306** in **Figure 3** is depicted in **Figure 5**. Memory card **500** includes internal memory card bus **502** connected to flash memory **504** and microcontroller **506**. Memory card **500** also includes memory card connector **508** connected to microcontroller **506** via card connector bus **510**, and wireless interface **512** connected to microcontroller **506**. As stated above, any logic device, such as a field programmable gate array (FPGA) or application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), may be used in place of microcontroller **506**. In addition, transmission methods of wireless interface **512** may include line of sight transmission and broadcast transmission.

As mentioned previously, the mechanism of the present invention allows for the wireless transfer of stitch data from a source system to an embroidery machine, and the subsequent update of the contents in memory, such as flash memory **308** in memory card **306**. The present invention also eliminates the need for modifying

the embroidery machine software to accommodate this peer-to-peer protocol.

Turning now to **Figure 6**, a flowchart of a process of transferring embroidery designs is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 6** may be initiated by the source system, such as computer **100** in **Figure 1**, or the process may be initiated by the stitching device, such as embroidery machine **302** in **Figure 3**. The processes illustrated in this example are implemented using a wireless connection between the embroidery machine and the stitch source system.

The process begins by initiating a change in the contents of the flash memory (step **600**). The process may be initiated by a PC, such as computer **100** in **Figure 1**, or the process may be initiated by the embroidery machine itself. Next, a determination is made as to whether the flash memory is currently in use (step **602**). For example, the microcontroller within the memory card may detect data signals generated from the flash memory to determine if the flash memory is in use. If the flash memory is in use, the process returns to step **600**.

Otherwise, a command is sent to effectively disconnect the memory card from the embroidery or sewing machine by signaling the various card detect signals accordingly (step **604**). In response, the memory card microcontroller disconnects the flash memory from the embroidery machine memory card connector (step **606**). This step may be accomplished by pushing a high z from the CPLD to the embroidery machine card connector.

Next, the memory card microcontroller erases the data stored in the flash memory, reprograms itself as necessary to acquire data from the PC wireless interface, and receives the new data (step **608**). The memory card microcontroller then reconnects the flash memory to the embroidery machine memory card connector by signaling the various card detect signals accordingly (step **610**). At this time, the embroidery or sewing machine may use the new design data stored in the flash memory.

In this manner, the present invention provides an improved method and system for transferring data to a sewing/embroidery system. The advantages of the present invention should be apparent in view of the detailed description provided above. The mechanism of the present invention allows for the wireless transmission of stitch data from a source system to an embroidery machine. The memory card containing stitch data is updated with new stitch data received from the source system. The stitch data is then made available to the embroidery machine. Consequently, new stitch data may be transferred to an embroidery machine without the need for physically carrying the memory card from the source system to the embroidery machine. In addition, there is no need to alter or redesign the software in the embroidery or sewing machine, since the present invention is implemented using existing connections and interfaces on the machines.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the

invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.